Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

FROM ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

DATE: January 2, 1948   25X1A

SUBJECT: FILES and RECORDS

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The other day, I mentioned to you, regarding the set-up and maintenance of security records, various changes that I thought could be made in the maintenance of our files at this time without the necessity for increased personnel or radical changes in present operating procedures.

The problem, at this time, is to obtain a check of security records by requesting a check of one source. Within the immediate shop there are at least three sets of records to be checked: 1. chain-dex or main files; 2. Reference Index; and 3. Liaison Section.

The type of information wanted from each of the above records may vary from mere biographical data to facilitate identification to complete background coverage by investigation.

Somewhere in the shop, there should be one set of records so that Reference Index, when it receives a report with a green "X", may be able to obtain immediately, or to determine immediately the existence of, all information already in the Division. This would involve having in one source records of both favorable and unfavorable reports obtained by the Liaison Section and records of all investigations conducted for CIA. This would enable Reference Index to perform the needed function of sending to Liaison all subsequently obtained information on persons previously name-checked and to send to Appraisal all such information on persons previously investigated. Our present procedures in this regard are purely passive.

By having favorable agency checks by Liaison in Reference Index, the Appraisal Section, instead of having the negative assurance of a "No Record" report, would be able to proceed in some cases with a more positive report of "No Record in four or six agencies". It would matter very little if the report were two, three, or even eight years old. A "No Record" Reference Index report of today and a four-way "No Record" report of eight years ago are still many times better than the former by itself inasmuch as for the most part it merely reflects operations of CIA and its predecessors from 1941 or 1942 to date while the other agencies' information is much older, and, needless to say, much broader.

It is generally accepted that a security activity is no better than the records it maintains. In fact, the biggest part of personnel security activities is records.

As CIA grows older and as its scope increases the security activities will increase. With every day that passes present and future national and international political events will result in a swing away from extremist political philosophies and resultant partial or complete disloyalty. In these cases old records and old information will be of extreme importance. It is not felt that the age of the records

Memorandum to ███████████████████████████████   dated January 2, 1948.   **25X1A**
Subject: FILES and RECORDS.

-2-

automatically lowers the value of the records.

At the present time, the Reference Index 3 x 5 records are the most logical
records to become our main records. The establishing of another set of records as
the main records would entail the posting thereto of Reference Index material or it
would result in having two sets of records instead of three when only one is
desirable and efficient.

As stated, the contemplated records would not involve any additional work
as far as current day-to-day procedures are concerned. To start the files, say from
today, would entail:

1. instead of file room maintaining 3 x 5 cards, these cards would be
    filed in Reference Index; and

2. instead of the Liaison Section maintaining 3 x 5 cards, these cards
    would also be filed in Reference Index.

To go back to bring the files current would involve the relatively small
tasks of:

1. Preparing 3 x 5 cards with name and number of all numbered cases and
    all "futures", "miscellaneous", and "affiliate" cases; and

2. Sorting into the Reference Index all 3 x 5 cards prepared in the past
    by the Liaison Section.

With the above action completed, a fairly complete set of card-records
would be had with relatively little effort and considerably increased efficiency.

The task of merging the files proper is not approached in this memorandum.
Eventually a more efficient file system will have to be devised. This, however, can
be deferred if the card records, which would show what file records we have or should
have, are properly set-up.

Once the card records are set up in this manner further thought could and
should be given to placing in them information not in the Security Office but in
other offices. One example of this is the information in Personnel containing the
names of all persons applying for employment whose cases were never submitted to
Security.

It is recommended that consideration be given this proposal. Even if it
is determined that we do not have the personnel to incorporate old records (which
lack could be compensated for very easily by over-time for which I volunteer) it
would still be possible to start the system currently with no increase in personnel.

Memorandum to ███████████████████████████████████ dated January 2, 1948.   **25X1A**
Subject: FILES and RECORDS.

-3-

No special forms or cards would be required to start the files. Plain
3 x 5 cards would suffice.   **25X1A**

25X1A

Inasmuch as this memorandum refers to operations and records of the Liaison
Section, a copy is being sent to ████████ for his information and for such comments
he may wish to make. A copy is also being given to ████████ for his information and
prior study in the event you may wish to discuss the matter in a staff-meeting.
Copies are also being given to ███████████████████████████ since the proposal refers
basically to their operations.

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WAO:JS